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**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Claim 1. (Currently amended) A mechanical pencil, comprising:

a barrel;

a lead feeding mechanism disposed in said barrel to tighten and feed a lead; and

a single-piece lead holder disposed between the lead feeding mechanism and a tip end of said barrel, said single-piece lead holder having a through hole through which the lead penetrates and comprising:

holding portions, for holding the lead;

a contact portion for contacting an inner peripheral surface of the barrel; and

a body,

said holding portions including a first holding portion at a front portion of the lead holder and a second holding portion at a rear portion of the lead holder,

the holding portions fixing the lead relative to the barrel during writing,

a maximum static friction force generated between the lead holder and an inner peripheral surface of said barrel is set to be larger than a maximum static friction force generated between the holding portions and the lead,

so that when a length of the lead becomes shorter than a distance between the lead feeding mechanism and the tip end of said barrel, said first holding portion holds the short lead and said second holding portion holds a next lead tightened by the lead feeding mechanism,

wherein said contact portion comprises an outside cylinder provided concentrically on an outside of the body,

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wherein said outside cylinder comprises a rib projecting in an outside diameter direction to come into contact with said inner peripheral surface of the barrel, and

wherein a slit is formed in a portion of the outside cylinder in which the rib of the outside cylinder is absent so that said rib is elastically displaceable radially outwardly into contact with said inner peripheral surface of the barrel.

Claims 2-5. (Canceled).

Claim 6. (Previously presented) The mechanical pencil according to claim 1,

wherein at least one of said holding portions of said body comprises at least one blade that projects in an inside diameter direction in a front end part of said body to come into contact with the lead.

Claim 7. (Previously presented) The mechanical pencil according to claim 1,

wherein at least one of said holding portions of said body comprises a rib that projects in an inside diameter direction in a rear end part of said body to come into contact with the lead.

Claims 8-9. (Canceled).

Claim 10. (Currently amended) A writing instrument, comprising:

a barrel;

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a writing medium feeding mechanism disposed in said barrel to be adapted to tighten and feed a writing medium; and

a single-piece writing medium holder disposed between the writing medium feeding mechanism and a tip end of said barrel, said writing medium holder having a through hole through which the writing medium penetrates and comprising:

holding portions for holding the writing medium;

a contact portion for contacting an inner peripheral surface of the barrel; and

a body,

said holding portions including a first holding portion at a front portion of the writing medium holder and a second holding portion at a rear portion of the writing medium holder,

the holding portions fixing the writing medium relative to the barrel during writing,

a maximum static friction force generated between the writing medium holder and an inner peripheral surface of said barrel is set to be larger than a maximum static friction force generated between the holding portions and the writing medium,

so that when a length of the writing medium becomes shorter than a distance between the writing medium and the tip end of said barrel,

said first holding portion holds the short writing medium and said second holding portion holds a next writing medium tightened by the writing medium feeding mechanism,

wherein said contact portion comprises an outside cylinder provided concentrically on an outside of the body,

wherein said outside cylinder comprises a rib projecting in an outside diameter direction

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to come into contact with said inner peripheral surface of the barrel, and

wherein a slit is formed in a portion of the outside cylinder in which the rib of the outside cylinder is absent so that said rib is elastically displaceable radially outwardly into contact with said inner peripheral surface of the barrel.

Claims 11-14. (Canceled).

Claim 15. (Previously presented) The writing instrument according to claim 10,

wherein at least one of said holding portions of said body comprises at least one blade that projects in an inside diameter direction in a front end part of said body to come into contact with the writing medium.

Claim 16. (Previously presented) The writing instrument according to claim 10,

wherein at least one of said holding portions of said body comprises a rib that projects in an inside diameter direction in a rear end part of said body to come into contact with the writing medium.

Claim 17. (Original) The writing instrument according to claim 16, wherein a slit is formed in a portion in which the rib is absent at the rear end part of the body.

Claim 18. (Canceled).

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Claim 19. (Previously presented) The writing instrument according to claim 10, wherein said holding portions comprise a blade and a rib which come into contact with the writing medium passing through the through hole.

Claim 20. (Previously presented) The writing instrument according to claim 19, wherein the blade is in a front end part of said body, and the rib is in a rear end part of said body.

Claim 21. (Currently amended) A writing instrument, comprising:

a tip end of a barrel; and

a single-piece writing medium holder held by said tip end of said barrel having a through hole through which a writing medium penetrates, and comprising

holding portions for holding the writing medium, said holding portions being formed at two or more positions along an axial length of said writing medium holder, said holding portions including a first holding portion at a front portion of the single-piece writing medium holder and a second holding portion at a rear portion of the single-piece writing medium holder;

a body, and

an outside cylinder provided concentrically on an outside of the body,

wherein when a length of the writing medium becomes short, said first holding portion holds the writing medium and said second holding portion holds an unused writing medium,

wherein said outside cylinder comprises a rib projecting in an outside diameter direction

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to come into contact with an inner peripheral surface of the barrel, and

wherein a slit is formed in a portion of the outside cylinder in which the rib of the outside cylinder is absent, and

wherein said rib is elastically displaceable radially outwardly into contact with the inner peripheral surface of the barrel, and

the holding portions fixing the writing medium relative to the barrel during writing,

a maximum static friction force generated between the writing medium holder and an inner peripheral surface of said barrel is set to be larger than a maximum static friction force generated between the holding portions and the writing medium.

Claim 22. (Previously presented) The pencil of claim 1, wherein the slit obtains a stable holding force on said lead.

Claim 23. (Previously presented) The instrument of claim 10, wherein the slit obtains a stable holding force on said lead.

Claim 24. (Previously presented) The instrument of claim 21, wherein the slit obtains a stable holding force on said lead.

Claim 25. (Currently amended) A writing instrument, comprising:  
a barrel;

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a writing medium feeding mechanism disposed in said barrel to be adapted to tighten and feed a writing medium; and

a single-piece writing medium holder disposed between the writing medium feeding mechanism and a tip end of said barrel, said writing medium holder being axially slidable within said barrel, having a through hole through which the writing medium penetrates and comprising:

holding portions for holding the writing medium; and

a contact portion for contacting an inner peripheral surface of the barrel,

said holding portions including a first holding portion at a front portion of the writing medium holder and a second holding portion at a rear portion of the writing medium holder,

the holding portions fixing the writing medium relative to the barrel during writing,

a maximum static friction force generated between the writing medium holder and an inner peripheral surface of said barrel is set to be larger than a maximum static friction force generated between the holding portions and the writing medium,

so that when a length of the writing medium becomes shorter than a distance between the writing medium and the tip end of said barrel, said first holding portion holds the short writing medium and said second holding portion holds a next writing medium tightened by the writing medium feeding mechanism,

wherein said contact portion comprises an outer peripheral surface that is elastically displaceable radially outwardly into contact with said inner peripheral surface of the barrel, and

wherein said contact portion maintains frictional contact with said inner peripheral surface of the barrel throughout the axially slidable extent.

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Claim 26. (Previously presented) The instrument of claim 25, wherein said single-piece writing medium holder further comprises a body and wherein said outer peripheral surface comprises an outside cylinder concentrically provided on an outside of said body.

Claim 27. (Previously presented) The instrument of claim 26, wherein said outside cylinder comprises a rib that maintains contact with said inner peripheral surface of the barrel.

Claim 28. (Previously presented) The instrument of claim 26, wherein said outside cylinder comprises a slit.

Claim 29. (Previously presented) The instrument of claim 26, wherein said body comprises a cylindrical body.

Claim 30. (Previously presented) The instrument of claim 29, wherein said single-piece writing medium holder further comprises a connecting part at a rear of said single-piece writing medium holder that connects said outside cylinder to said cylindrical body.